

MINUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL AND UTAH COUNTY
COMMISSION SPECIAL JOINT MEETING HELD APRIL 26, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.
in the Vernal City Conference Room, 374 East Main, Vernal, Utah 84078.

PRESENT:

UINTAH COUNTY: Commissioners Brad Horrocks, Bill Stringer, Bart Haslem.

VERNAL CITY: Councilmembers Dave Everett, Ted Munford, Nick Porter and Travis Allan and Mayor Doug Hammond.

STAFF: Quinn Bennion, Jon Stearmer and Roxanne Behunin.

GUESTS: Kurt Case, Shaylee Hacking, Robin O’Driscoll, Derek Hopper, Josh Bake, Sonja Norton, Josh Brown, Aaron Averett, Alan Hacking, Leisha Colthorp, Mayor Dean Baker and Adam Long.

WELCOME: Vernal City Mayor Doug Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that several participants with the Downtown Plan will be joining this meeting electronically.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT & APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING: *Commissioner Bill Stringer moved to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed a unanimous vote.*

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2021: *Councilmember Dave Everett moved to approve the minutes of January 25, 2021 as presented. Councilmember Ted Munford seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.*

WESTON’S VISION PRESENTATION AND REQUEST FOR FUNDS FOR A PLAY ALL PLAYGROUND – SHAYLEE HACKING: Shaylee Hacking introduced her son Weston, and other family members Johnnie and Alan. She explained that Weston has CP with developmental delays and is blind. Being in a wheelchair and blind it is hard for Weston to play at the park. His chair is hard to move through wood chips and over ledges and other families with disabled children face these same challenges. Shaylee stated she started this vision to raise funds to purchase a net swing to allow all children and even adults to play at the park. \$68,000 has been raised so far which will help pay for the first piece of equipment which is fully accessible. Alan Hacking stated he has received a quote from a company that works with the Recreation District for two items at a turnkey cost of \$95,975 so they need to raise the rest of the funds. Shaylee Hacking stated they have chosen to put the equipment at the Naples Park with ADA ramps. Commissioner Brad Horrocks asked how they raised the \$68,000. Alan Hacking answered they held fund raisers, the high school did chuck your change, held corn hole tournaments and the Haunt supported them. Commissioner Bill Stringer noted that they need approximately \$14,500. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated this is a great project and the local entities can figure out how to complete the funding. Mayor Dean Baker stated that Naples City will discuss adding \$10,000 and they do have a spot for the equipment in the park. Alan Hacking stated they have people willing to help with the prep work. Councilmember Ted Munford stated between the four entities, Vernal City, Naples

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City, Uintah County and the Recreation District, the funds can be budgeted. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated he would put this item on the agenda for Monday. Councilmember Ted Munford stated the Vernal City Council will also put it on the agenda.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE DOWNTOWN VERNAL PLAN AND PROCESS: Quinn Bennion explained that Vernal City is working on a downtown plan to revitalize that area of the City. He noted that most people remember the downtown of years ago and it just got tired. There has been a lot of movement the last few decades, and now is the right time to focus on downtown to create places to make memories. The City received two grants to help with this planning process. The first one is from UDOT in the amount of \$100,000 to help plan how downtown interacts with traffic, and one from the Community Impact Board in the amount of \$30,000. The County also committed \$15,000 and Vernal City will pay \$15,000. UDOT used their procurement process and selected a firm, MHTN architects, to create the plan. Also, the City hired the law firm of Smith Hartvigsen to help establish a Community Development and Renewal Agency and Zions Bank will help with the financial set up of the CDRA. One of the first steps will be to hold an open house and receive public input with a walk of downtown on May 5th. A tour of other communities is scheduled this next weekend to get ideas for Vernal and how to finance any updates. Aaron Averett stated that a survey was sent out and they have received 650 responses so far.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL PRESENTATION: Quinn Bennion introduced Adam Long, the attorney with Smith Hartvigsen. Adam Long indicated that his main practice area is redevelopment and he would like to present a crash course on this issue. The first step is for the City to create a new legal body with special powers that is still governed by the City Council and works within a project area. When development or redevelopment start happening, the taxable value of the properties goes up creating more tax revenue. The theory is to use that new revenue to incentivize the project. This step requires the taxing entities to give up some of that tax revenue which would not exist without the development. For example, if an industrial park needs water, sewer and power brought to the property, that is a big expense. This tax could be used to reimburse that expense to get the project to happen. The concept has to be something the market will support, is desirable and beneficial to the community. Main Street project areas are appealing for business's and housing. CDRA's are a special local tool that can be used as an incentive for development in a specific location so rather than a plain development the City can help get something more exciting. In the past, the government agency had to bond which saddled the community with the redevelopment risk. Quinn Bennion acknowledged that the other taxing entities need to be involved early on and understand the process. Adam Long stated that the CDRA is the most flexible local tool available. A participation agreement is signed between the agency and the developer that includes the tax revenue incentive which is now closer to 50%. Quinn Bennion clarified that the developer would get 50% of the increased tax back to help with the development. Adam Long agreed. Quinn Bennion stated that potentially there could be a lot of users to upgrade the buildings on a smaller scale with new windows, back façade, patio seating etc. Adam Long indicated that is very common to have an area with no giant projects which leads to organic growth and requires a lot of creativity. He presented a map of downtown and displayed the properties that will not create any tax revenue owned by non-profits or government. He noted that the initial assessment showed a tax revenue decline of 11% overall the last 3 years. The CRA has the ability to improve those numbers. He noted that the last step for the CRA is to administer

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the program. Quinn Bennion stated looking forward he is comfortable implementing a CRA for downtown and allow tax incentives to help and assist existing shops so downtown can be more vibrant and attractive. Commissioner Brad Horrocks stated he likes the concept and would need to see the whole picture before making any commitment. The elected officials thanked Mr. Long for the information.

ADJOURN: There being no further discussion; *Councilmember Nick Porter moved to adjourn. Councilmember Dave Everett seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote and the meeting was adjourned.*

Quinn Bennion, City Manager